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ABSTRACT

In order to insure maximum success of the school's Head Start program, parents and teachers associated with a public school in Harlem chose a program based on the Interdependent Learner Model Follow Through Program originated at New York University. The federally funded program was introduced into kindergarten and first-grade classrooms and concentrated on direct reading instruction based on sound patterns and supplemented by use of the talking typewriter. Originally the program served over 300 children, and expansion into second grade has increased this number. Teachers are aided by two paraprofessionals per classroom and by additional parent volunteers. The adults work with individual children using a predesigned system with highly structured directions and responses to teach reading skills. Games supplement this activity, and children are urged to work with other children in order to increase interdependence with peers while lessening dependence on adults. Evaluation after 1 year of operation showed significantly better readers among the Follow Through students than among other first graders. (MS)

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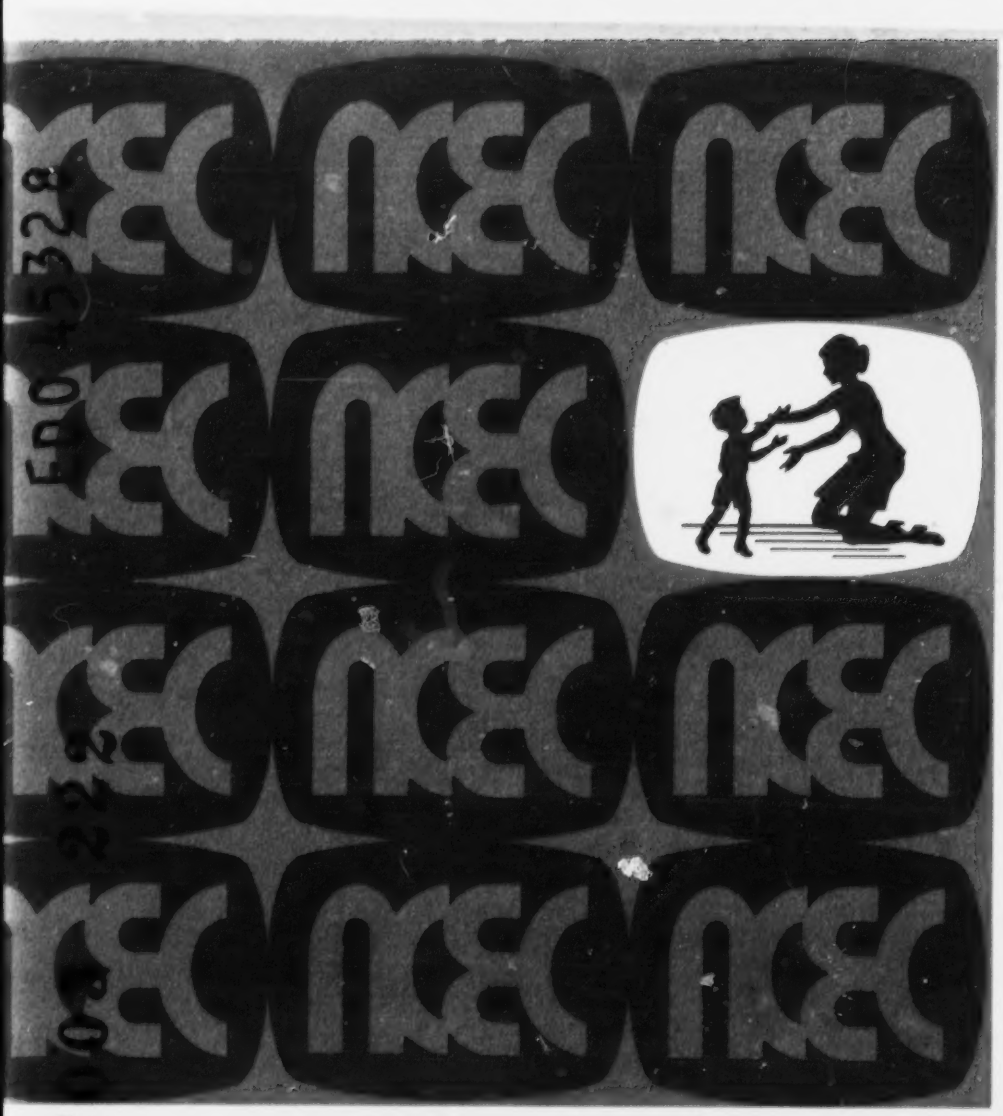

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Model Programs

Childhood Education

Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program

New York, New York

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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Model Programs

Childhood Education

Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program

New York, New York

A program designed to raise reading achievement by encouraging children to learn interdependently and by emphasizing decoding skills

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
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OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
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FOREWORD

This booklet is one of 34 in a series of promising programs on childhood education prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. The series was written under contract by the American Institutes for Research for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Office of Child Development and the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Within the broad area of childhood education the series includes descriptions of programs on reading and language development, the disadvantaged, preschool education, and special education. In describing a program, each booklet provides details about the purpose; the children reached; specific materials, facilities, and staff involved; and other special features such as community services, parental involvement, and finances. Sources of further information on the programs are also provided.

P.S. 76, a public elementary school housed in an old building in New York City, is involved in a Follow Through program that uses small-group instruction and an experimental, but seemingly old-fashioned, method of teaching beginning reading skills. Follow Through is a federally supported program aimed at helping children in their early school years to build on the foundation provided by Head Start or a similar preschool program. In 1970-71 children in kindergarten and first and second grades at P.S. 76 are being served by the program--and justifiably so. Test scores indicate that, of all the schools in the district, P.S. 76 is the school with the lowest level of reading. School and community are involved in an effort to improve the education of the children in the community.

The community served by P.S. 76 is located in Harlem and consists mainly of low-income families, many on welfare. The community consists exclusively of minority groups: about 99 percent of the people are black; the rest are from other minority groups. A small group of children and their parents speak Spanish or French, but most people speak the characteristic black dialect. The decentralization plan that is starting in New York City has enabled the parents in the community to be more involved

in the schools. Under this plan there is, in addition to the one New York City school board, a school board for every district; and school board members are elected by the residents in the district. The school board of District 3, which serves P.S. 76, has become increasingly interested in raising the standards of education within its district. There has been increased emphasis on teacher training, use of current materials, and other innovative techniques.

2 COMMUNITY SELECTS MODEL

The parents in the community were actually involved in choosing, from among seven possibilities, the particular Follow Through program currently operating at P.S. 76--the Interdependent Learner Model. This model is just one of the Follow Through models that are concerned with the education and development of children in their early school years. These models have been developed and are being sponsored by colleges and regional laboratories; they are being tested in various schools throughout the country.

The Interdependent Learner Model Follow Through Program is sponsored by Dr. Lassar Gotkin of New York University. The reading aspect of the program is based on a research study that he

and his staff did with a small group of Harlem kindergartners at P.S. 175. He felt that the "look-say" method of teaching reading did not help children learn to read; so he derived a highly structured sequence of lessons that taught children how to attack words on the basis of their sound parts. All of the lessons in his program were based on just six letters (*m, o, p, s, a, t*), six two-letter combinations called bigrams (*mo, so, po, ma, sa, pa*), and seven three-letter words called trigrams (*mom, mop, pop, pot, sam, pat, sat*). The Edison Responsive Environment, or "Talking Typewriter," was used, and the disadvantaged Harlem kindergartners *did* learn. They seemed to be ready for more than the reading readiness activities customarily taught in kindergarten.

Perhaps it was the reading program of the Interdependent Learner Model that appealed to the parents. This program emphasized the early introduction of *direct* reading instruction; and, as test scores seemed to indicate, the children at P.S. 76 needed this. Characteristic of disadvantaged children from the ghetto, their skills in the language arts area were weak.

FOLLOW THROUGH IN K THROUGH GRADE 2

In 1969-70, the first year that Follow Through operated at P.S. 76, 305 children were served by the program--125 kindergartners and 180 first-graders--at a total cost of about $343,770. Ninety-nine percent of the children were black. There were some French-speaking and Spanish-speaking children; these children came from Haiti, Honduras, and Panama. Half the kindergarten children had had Head Start experience, and three-fourths of the first graders had had kindergarten experience. In the 1970-71 school year, second grade was added to the program so that it now serves children in kindergarten through second grade.

PARAPROFESSIONALS IN THE CLASSROOMS

Each classroom has two paraprofessionals--educational assistants or teacher aides--in addition to the regular classroom teacher. The educational assistants are required to be high school graduates; the teacher aides are required to have a fifth-grade education. Parents are also encouraged to serve as volunteers. Having so many adults in the classroom increases the number of group leaders available and facilitates the small-group arrangement required in the Interdependent Learner Model.

The paraprofessionals are also able to use the Performance Aids in Teaching (PAT), an important ingredient in the model's reading program.

PERFORMANCE AIDS IN TEACHING

PAT may be likened to an actor's script; everything that the instructor and the child are to say, along with the necessary pauses, is specified. PAT may take a variety of forms, but all forms are highly structured so that paraprofessionals as well as teachers may use them. The form that PAT took in Gotkin's research study with the small group of Harlem kindergartners at P.S. 175 was a series of structured lessons on the "Talking Typewriter." However, the "Talking Typewriter" is too expensive to use on a large scale, and PAT booklets that allow paraprofessionals to teach complex beginning reading skills with very little pretraining have been developed. Two pages from one of these booklets might look like the following:

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left-hand page	*right-hand page*
SAY THE SOUND OF THE FIRST TWO LETTERS..SA	
SAY THE SOUND OF THE LAST LETTER.....T	SAT
NOW SAY THE WORD: SAY *SAT*	

The child looks at the right-hand page while the teacher or paraprofessional reads the left-hand page and pauses at the dots for the child's response.

The children are taught more than the spoken word. The program includes pantomine-language activities through which the children learn how the spoken word means more when facial expressions and other forms of nonverbal communication are added. Nonverbal communication is also stressed in the dancing and singing involved in the music program

Communication skills are also used in the children's mathematics program, which teaches the children to use language to solve problems and then to explain the problem-solving process to others. Problem solving is also done through role playing. Language, mathematics, and logic are all interwoven in games involving matrix boards, triangle card decks, and cuisenaire rods.

LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE

The PAT materials used by the children at P.S. 76 consist of 60 structured lessons that teach reading skills, a programed reader containing cartoons, programed games, and a test series for checking on the children's progress. In the program, reading is viewed as a decoding process in which the child translates words into sounds (as illustrated on p. 6). The decoding skills a child needs to analyze and synthesize words include (1) visually separating a word into its parts and saying the parts from left to right and (2) using the sound parts to come up with the oral blend for the whole word. In the program the child is taught all of the single letter sounds, bigram blending, trigram blending, and some useful sight words such as *a*, *is*, *the*, etc.

Constant repetition is an important part of the program, and the sequence of the bigrams and trigrams is worked out to maximize learning rate.

The teachers have been resourceful in modifying and adapting the PAT materials so that they fit in with the basic reading instruction that the children get from the Bank Street readers and workbooks. These readers contain interracial illustrations and stories that are relevant to life in the city. Thus, they are well suited to the black children at P.S. 76. Additional aids to teach beginning reading are found in the kindergarten classrooms, which have listening centers equipped with earphones, cassette tapes, and workbooks designed to teach beginning reading skills.

LEARNING THROUGH GAMES

Structured games are an important part of the teaching in all subject areas in the Interdependent Learner Model. The model's sponsor feels that games make the subject matter more interesting, challenging, and involving. Also children of different ages and abilities can participate. Each child assumes a role as teacher or player, depending on his ability. As teacher, a child must

explain the materials to other children. The resulting communication in turn stimulates language development, which ghetto children need so much.

BECOMING INTER-DEPENDENT LEARNERS

Having the children explain things to one another leads them to become increasingly dependent on each other but not so dependent on the teacher. They become "interdependent learners," as the name of the model indicates. This interdependency is facilitated by the small-group arrangement of the classroom, which enables several groups to meet simultaneously. If one were to walk into a classroom, he might see one group of six or seven children led by the teacher, another group led by a student, other groups led by the assistants, and two or three children wandering about. One group might be doing silent reading from textbooks; a third group might be sitting around a table looking at flip cards.

The flip cards are part of the PAT materials used to teach the decoding skills needed to attack new words phonetically. Watching a group going through flip cards is reminiscent of old-fashioned drill exercises; sounds of letters, syllables, and

phonetic units are associated with visual symbols in constant repetition, regardless of meaning. The group leader, possibly one of the students in the group, shows the children a word (perhaps a nonsense word) and asks them to say the sound of the word or the syllables. This is done over and over again. According to Dr. Gotkin's research, the value of the method lies in the particular sound and visual units that are isolated for retention and the way in which the units are sequenced.

In all classroom activities the teachers and teacher assistants are encouraged to respond positively to the children's efforts. There are no "wrong answers," and continual positive reinforcement is used. The "black is beautiful" theme is also emphasized. Photographs of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and other leading figures in black history are on the walls of many of the classrooms, and the children are taught African and Afro-American dancing routines. Children also gain a sense of importance when they have the opportunity to be group leaders and to teach others. Personnel involved in the program are encouraged to give the children a sense of importance and to show empathy.

STAFF TRAINING

Training of the personnel in the program is the responsibility of Dr. Gotkin. A summer-workshop is held for 1 week before the start of school; and meetings are held with members of Dr. Gotkin's staff one afternoon every week during the school year. At these meetings the staff members share ideas, discuss current problems relating to the program, watch teaching technique demonstrations by the project and assistant project coordinators, and examine teaching techniques of teachers on the staff via videotape.

INVOLVING PARENTS

The program sponsor is also responsible for explaining the program to parents, and an intensive effort is being made to involve them in the classroom work and to link the school with community organizations. There is a "family room" at the school where parents and aides work cooperatively on school projects and where parents can drop in and become familiar with the goals of the school. There are also four family workers, directed by a school-community liaison person, who work with the parents of children in the program. Parents are also urged to be volunteer teacher aides in the classrooms.

GAINS IN READING

Informal textbook tests, which involve a specialized reading teacher's judgment concerning reading comprehension of selected grade level books, were given in the spring of 1970 to first and second graders. An analysis of these data shows a statistical difference between the two groups: more first-grade children (who were in Follow Through) than second-grade children (who were not in Follow Through) were above grade level in reading. In this complex situation involving children from a ghetto, Follow Through *has* improved the children's reading.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Further information on the Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program may be obtained by contacting the following people:

Miss Martha Sellers, Project Coordinator
P.S. 76
220 West 121st Street
New York, New York 10027
(212) 666-8128

or

Dr. Lassar Gotkin
Institute for Developmentai Studies
239 Greene Street
New York, New York 10003
(212) 598-2464

Arrangements to visit the program can be made through Miss Martha Sellers, the Project Coordinator, at P.S. 76.

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MODEL PROGRAMS--Childhood Education

This is one in a series of 34 descriptive booklets on childhood education programs prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

The Day Nursery Assn. of Cleveland, Ohio
Neighborhood House Child Care Services, Seattle, Wash.
Behavior Analysis Model of a Follow Through Program, Oraibi, Ariz.
Cross-Cultural Family Center, San Francisco, Calif.
NRO Migrant Child Development Center, Pasco, Wash.
Bilingual Early Childhood Program, San Antonio, Tex.
Santa Monica Children's Centers, Calif.
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah
Dubnoff School for Educational Therapy, North Hollywood, Calif.
Demonstration Nursery Center for Infants and Toddlers, Greensboro, N.C.
Responsive Environment Model of a Follow Through Program, Goldsboro, N.C.
Center for Early Development and Education, Little Rock, Ark.
DOVACK, Monticello, Fla.
Perceptual Development Center Program, Natchez, Miss.
Appalachia Preschool Education Program, Charleston, W. Va.
Foster Grandparent Program, Nashville, Tenn.
Hartford Early Childhood Program, Conn.
Philadelphia Teacher Center, Pa.
Cognitively Oriented Curriculum, Ypsilanti, Mich.
Mothers' Training Program, Urbana, Ill.
The Micro-Social Preschool Learning System, Vineland, N.J.
Project PLAN, Parkersburg, W. Va.
Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program, New York, N.Y.
San Jose Police Youth Protection Unit, Calif.
Model Observation Kindergarten, Amherst, Mass.
Boston Public Schools Learning Laboratories, Mass.
Martin Luther King Family Center, Chicago, Ill.
Behavior Principles Structural Model of a Follow Through Program, Dayton, Ohio
University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum, Honolulu, Hawaii
Springfield Avenue Community School, Newark, N.J.
Corrective Reading Program, Wichita, Kans.
New Schools Exchange, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Tacoma Public Schools Early Childhood Program, Wash.
Community Cooperative Nursery School, Menlo Park, Calif.

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